

## **Senate Bill 308 - Environment - Statewide Green Business Certification Program**

Statement of David Guier, Senior Director at Global Communities

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Hearing

January 31, 2022

### **SUPPORT**

Senate Bill 308 requires the Department of the Environment to establish and administer a statewide green business certification program to recognize businesses operating in a manner that reduces their environmental footprint and provide consumers with information on how to identify those businesses; and requires the Department to update and enhance the statewide green business certification program in consultation with the Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 308.

My name is David Guier. I am a Senior Director at Global Communities, a non-profit organization based in Silver Spring. Global Communities implements development and humanitarian assistance programs overseas, funded primarily by the U.S. Agency for International Development, but also by other federal and non-federal agencies.

Global Communities is a Green Business, certified in 2019 by the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection. This is why I am providing my written testimony.

Global Communities' path to Green Business Certification began in 2016, when a survey of staff worldwide identified climate change as a top concern. Soon after that, a Green Team was formed at company headquarters in Silver Spring. Initially, the Green Team's efforts were modest. What really sparked our efforts was connecting to Montgomery County's Green Business Certification program. This spark can be attributed several factors.

- First and foremost, Montgomery County staff were extremely helpful in explaining the benefits of certification and the steps to become certified and offering encouragement and support throughout the process.
- Second, through the Green Business process, we connected to other like-minded organizations and individuals offering new ways to look at not only our office space, but also the larger world around us.
  - One connection I personally made through the certification process was to the **Maryland Climate Leadership Academy**. Through this connection, I was privileged to be recognized by Gov. Hogan as a Climate Change Professional® in January 2020 in the Maryland State House.
- Third, the Green Business program provided an easy-to-understand framework for implementing a program of workplace sustainability, a way for our organization or any organization to start having impact on the climate change challenges around and ahead of us.
  - Our sustainability program at Global Communities includes, amongst many initiatives, a Zero Waste Office, a Green Purchasing Policy, and perhaps most impactful, roll-out of the Green Business program to our offices worldwide.

In closing, I often think about what the future holds for my three grandchildren, ages 11, nine and seven. The climate science and the scientists tell us unequivocally that without meaningful and sustained action, the planet they will come to inherit will be different—profoundly so—than the one that our parents and grandparents passed on to us.

We're already seeing changes in the environment around us—record-breaking global temperatures year by year; more—and more furious—fires in places like California and Australia; accelerating Greenland ice melt; sunny day flooding up and down the Gulf and East coasts of the U.S., including right here in Maryland. And as the science also predicts—bigger, wetter and more violent storms.

As a Climate Change Professional® and even more so, as a grandfather, the way I perceive it, the time for wait-and-see, for let's proceed with business-as-usual, has passed. The time for meaningful and sustained action at every level of society—including at the level of the organization—is upon us all.

This is why Senate Bill 308 is so important. By extending the Green Business Certification Program across the State of Maryland, you can provide the opportunity for many organizations across many sectors to look at their office space and the larger world in new, meaningful ways. You can provide these organizations the opportunity to be part of the solution to climate change going forward, rather than part of the backward-looking business-as-usual approach that has led us to this fraught moment in time.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on this important piece of legislation.